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Viewing cable 07BAGHDAD3733, BARZANI ANNOUNCES KDP/PUK EFFORT TO RESOLVE LEGISLATIVE DEADLOCK, DISCUSSES KRG EFFORTS TO END PKK CRISIS

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
07BAGHDAD3733	2007-11-13 11:27	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET	Embassy Baghdad

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 003733

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/12/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [ECON](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: BARZANI ANNOUNCES KDP/PUK EFFORT TO RESOLVE LEGISLATIVE DEADLOCK, DISCUSSES KRG EFFORTS TO END PKK CRISIS

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

This is an Erbil Regional Reconstruction Team message.

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: KRG President Masoud Barzani told the Ambassador November 8 that he and President Talabani would meet to review and find a solution to end the current deadlock on pending GOI legislation. He proposed a national reconciliation conference in Kurdistan to move the political process forward and ensure the opening provided by the improved security situation is not wasted. Barzani said he supported the U.S.-Iraq Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA), and would help as necessary to ensure the agreement proceeds as planned. The Ambassador outlined the three stage process to end the PKK crisis, and emphasized the need for the KRG to take concrete steps that produce a decline in PKK activities. Barzani expressed concern that Iran would give asylum to ousted PKK fighters, and create a new front to destabilize Iraq. He said the KRG will participate in future negotiations if Turkey shows respect to future delegations, and that steps have already been taken to shut down PKK operations. END SUMMARY.

U.S. commitment to Iraq is long-term. . . .

¶2. (C) The Ambassador thanked President Barzani for his quiet management of the Turkish hostage release, which respected Turkish sensitivities. He said he is working with Prime Minister Maliki on a declaration that will build on the August communique, and hopes the draft will be circulated in the coming days. The declaration is based on broad principles, with details on security, economic and political to be negotiated over the coming year, and will demonstrate long-term U.S. commitment to Iraq. Ambassador noted he expects the UN Security Council Resolution on Iraq will routinely roll-over before the end of the year, with the understanding that this will be the last Chapter Seven resolution for Iraq, which will be replaced by the U.S. Iraq Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA).

. . . But political progress required

¶3. (C) The Ambassador noted the frustrating lack of progress on pending legislation, noting that more than two months after the five leaders agreed on a draft de-Baathification law, it still has not been sent to the CoR. The Ambassador emphasized that President Barzani has always been supportive, and asked him to do anything to push the legislation forward.

The Ambassador said good progress has been made on the security front by working together, but the lack of visible progress on the political front is undermining national reconciliation. Under Secretary Jeffery echoed the Ambassador's concern about the political process in Iraq, saying now is the moment to show political unity and agreement on key legislation. The Under Secretary said passage of the hydrocarbon legislation would send a powerful signal to the world that Iraq's leadership is willing to manage resources in a responsible way.

¶4. (C) Barzani responded that he would strongly support the

proposed U.S.-Iraq Strategic Partnership Agreement, and that he had even been involved in preparing the groundwork for the agreement. He said during his last visit to Baghdad he focused on pending legislation, including the hydrocarbons and de-Baathification laws, and that he was "amazed" the legislation is still pending. He said he is fed up with reaching agreements with various parties in Baghdad, who then decide agreements must be re-negotiated. He said he cannot see a solution as long as GOI power is in the hands of radical Islamists who don't believe in democracy or co-existence. Prime Minister Maliki is losing track, shifting to become "a dictator" and marginalizing others. Barzani gave as an example the Arab tribes in Ninewa, who approached the KRG to tackle their problems with terrorists, and had sent a delegation to Baghdad to request assistance. However, the Prime Minister had done nothing, as he was concerned it would disrupt the Shia-Sunni balance. Barzani concluded that the national reconciliation situation in Baghdad had reached a "dead-end."

Barzani and Talabani to discuss national reconciliation

15. (C) Barzani said he would like to be seen as part of the solution, and agreed that the lack of progress on the political front will have a

Three Stage Process to End PKK Crisis

16. (S) The Ambassador congratulated the GOI for its performance on the PKK crisis. He said that putting the focus on the crisis as one between Turkey and Iraq, not between Turkey and the Kurdistan Region, helped calm the situation, and active Kurdish participation in the GOI ensured the effort's success. However, the crisis remains serious and we must ensure that the PKK's presence in Iraq over the next five years will be different from the last five years, when they consolidated and strengthened their presence in Iraq. He said that the U.S. understands the PKK is not the KRG's friend, but they are on Iraqi territory and there is an urgent necessity to take effective steps against them. He said the establishment of an operations center, under Prime Minister Nechirvan's direction, the recent, more balanced statements from the KRG, and the low-key release of the Turkish hostages are helpful gestures that indicate Kurdish intent to tackle the PKK problem.

17. (S) The Ambassador outlined a three-stage process to ensure a long term solution to the PKK problem. The first, and most critical phase to prevent disaster, is to establish controls to eliminate PKK supply routes, end the movement of PKK members, close PKK-affiliated political offices, trace and stop PKK financial flows, and increase surveillance and control at the Erbil and Sulimaniyah airports so that known PKK members cannot enter easily. He told Barzani he expects arrests will be made, and there will be a decline in PKK activities. The second stage would involve broader bilateral and trilateral collaboration, which would include increased KRG representation in U.S., Turkey, and Iraq trilateral efforts. The third stage would be to work towards a permanent political solution.

18. (C) President Barzani responded that neither the KDP nor the PUK had ever been allied with the PKK, and between 1992 and 2000 they had lost over 5,000 people to PKK violence, with 800 people maimed. He compared the PKK to Pol Pot, and said that the PKK cannot be allowed to have the upper hand in the community. Laughing, he noted that the Kurdistan Democratic Solutions party offices had been closed in Sulimaniyah, Dohuk, and Erbil, yet they remained open in Mosul and Kirkuk, as they operate under the Iraqi High Electoral Commission sanction.

19. (S) He said he failed to understand Turkey's alarming stance. Prior to the regime change in Baghdad, Iraqi Kurdish leaders were received at the highest level in Turkey, but now, even though the KRG is a legal entity enshrined in the Iraqi Constitution, the GOT calls the KRG illegal. He also noted that the daily statements by Turkish officials on the Article 140 process and Kirkuk and the personalized attacks indicate Turkish involvement in Iraq's internal affairs. President Barzani said that the KRG needs guarantees from Turkey that their real aim is not the Kurdistan Region in Iraq, with the PKK serving as a pretext. In addition, the KRG would participate in negotiations, but not if Turkey embarrasses Iraqi delegations. He said they also have public opinion, not only Turkey, and they are not accustomed to being threatened with thousands of troops. He noted that Saddam Hussein had half a million troops and chemical weapons, and that they did not bow to him. They also won't bow to Turkey.

Possible new Iranian front if PKK chased out

110. (S) President Barzani noted also that if the PKK is chased out of northern Iraq, Iran will open their gates to the PKK and encourage alliances with Ansar al Sunna and increase their support for terrorist activities. Barzani said that we risk the possibility of opening up a major new front, and given that Iran is killing American soldiers, do we want them to gain a foothold in the KRG? The Ambassador agreed that dealing with Iran is important, but would have to be dealt with in the second phase of resolving the PKK crisis. He also noted it would not be in the Kurds' interest for Iran's new consulate in Erbil to be staffed with Quds officers. Barzani countered that the KRG had warned the Iranians about posting Quds force officers and said the U.S. is welcome to arrest any Quds officers operating in the KRG.

Comment

111. (C) President Barzani showed strong support for the Strategic Partnership Agreement, and offered to help as necessary to ensure its success. And although he is clearly very pessimistic about Prime Minister Maliki's capabilities as a democratic leader, Barzani claims he's committed to national reconciliation. On the PKK, he bristled at the threats and personal attacks that have emanated from Turkish press and officials. He emphasized the need for Turkey to engage respectfully with Kurdish leaders in order to successfully shut down the PKK. End Comment.

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